



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



# NEWSLETTER

*The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information to help others be supportive.*

**September-October 2019**

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## YOU ARE INVITED

The Compassionate Friends - Metrowest Chapter meets twice a month. Evenings on the third Tuesday from 7:30 to 9:30 pm in the library of St. Mary's Parish Center, Route 16, Washington St., Holliston. The parish center is located between the church and the rectory. Our next two meetings will be on:

**September 17th & October 15th**

The **Tuesday** afternoon meetings will be held on the last Tuesday of the month next to St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Milford at the parish center. **Please call Ed or Joan Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 by the last Monday or earlier if you plan to attend.**

**Directions....**On Route 16 (Main St.) going north through downtown Milford (Main St.) at the Town Hall on the right take a left at the lights onto Winter St. The parish center is the last building before the church.

Going south on Route 16 (East Main St.) after Sacred Heart Church on the left, bear right on Main St., continue past Dunkin' Donuts on the right, proceed to the next set of lights and take a right onto Winter St. There is parking on both sides of the street. Look for Compassionate Friends signs to meeting room.

**September 24th & October 29th**

## The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace, but whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone.

**We are The Compassionate Friends. ©2018**

## WHO ARE WE?

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, nonsectarian, mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.

Our primary purpose is to assist the bereaved in the positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the death of a child and to support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health.

The secondary purpose is to provide information and education about bereaved parents and siblings for those who wish to understand. Our objective is to help members of the community, including family, friends, employers, co-workers, and professionals to be supportive.

Meetings are open to all bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. No dues or fees are required to belong to the Metrowest Chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

**Weather Cancellation**

**In the event of inclement weather on meeting days or nights, if in doubt call:  
Ed or Joan Motuzas at  
(508) 473-4239**



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



## Chapter Information

### Co-leaders

\* Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239  
 \* Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

### Secretary

\* Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

### Treasurer

\* Joseph Grillo 508/473-7913

### Webmaster

\* Al Kennedy 508/533/9299

### Librarian

Ed Motuzas 508/473/4239

### Newsletter

Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239

### Senior Advisors

\* Rick & Peg Dugan 508/877-1363

### Steering Committee \*

Judy Daubney 508/529-6942  
 Janice Parmenter 508/528-5715  
 Linda Teres 508/366-2085  
 Mitchell Greenblatt 508/881-2111  
 Wendy Bruno 508/429-7998

The chapter address is:

The Compassionate Friends  
 Metrowest Chapter  
 26 Simmons Dr.  
 Milford, MA 01757-1265

### Regional Coordinator

Dennis Gravelle  
 638 Pleasant St.  
 Leominster, MA 01453-6222  
 Phone (978) 537-2736  
 dgtef@aol.com

The Compassionate Friends has a national office that supports and coordinates chapter activities. The national office can be reached as follows:

The Compassionate Friends  
 P.O. Box 3696  
 Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696  
 Voice Toll Free (877) 969-0010  
 Fax (630) 990-0246  
 Web Page:  
 www.compassionatefriends.org

**Chapter Web Page**  
**www.tcfmetrowest.com**

## TRIBUTES, GIFTS AND DONATIONS

There are no dues or fees to belong to *The Compassionate Friends*. Just as our chapter is run entirely by volunteers, your voluntary, tax-deductible donations enable us to send information to newly bereaved parents, purchase pamphlets and books, contribute to the national chapter and meet other chapter expenses.

**THANK YOU** to the friends who help keep our chapter going with their contributions.

### Love Gifts

Veronica Moore in loving memory of her son **Sean Patrick Moore** on his anniversary November 21st. "Always loved and forever missed."

Roberta Arena in loving memory of her son **Michael J. Smith**.

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Raymond in loving memory of their daughter **Tara M. Raymond**. "Her huge smile will be missed, but loved forever."

Mr. Donald DiLorenzo in loving memory of his son **Christopher D. DiLorenzo**. "Forever missed and always loved."

Mr. David Holland in loving memory of his son **Kevin Holland** on his birthday August 22nd.

Nancy Carpenter in loving memory of her son **James S. Carpenter VI**. "Always loved and forever missed."

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Toth in loving memory of their son **Ryan C. Toth** on his anniversary October 22nd.





# Our Children Remembered

As a regular feature, the newsletter acknowledges anniversaries of the deaths of our children/siblings and their birthdays. This issue covers the months, September and October. If information about your loved one is missing, incorrect or our chapter files are in error, please send the correct data, including your name, address, and telephone number, the name of your loved one and the birthday and date and cause of death to the newsletter editor, Ed Motuzas, 26 Simmons Dr., Milford, MA 01757-1265.

## *Anniversaries*

### *September*

CHAD ARTHUR HOLBROOK  
MONICA MICHELLE CURRAN  
DAVID HEMINGWAY  
DAVID ALEXANDER SCHNEGG  
JONATHAN DAVID COHEN  
GREG BRUNO  
MICHAEL VINCENT TYNAN  
RAYMOND JOHN HOBSON

### *October*

ANDREW DELPRETE  
RYAN C. TOTH  
MARC R. PEARLMAN  
DANIEL L. PHIPPS  
CLIFFORD CROWE

## *Birthdays*

### *September*

STEVEN "CHRIS" MARSHALL  
TYLER PARMENTER  
SAMUEL O'DEFE OTOBO  
WILLIAM BRUCE-TAGOE  
CHRISTOPHER THOMAS GRYNKEWICZ  
RUSSELL J. TERES  
AARON STEVEN GRAY  
RICHARD EDWARD JONES  
BETSY CHICK-GRANT  
ANDREW J. DONOVAN

### *October*

ERIC C. EATON  
COREY S. VAUTIER  
EVAN M. RODRIGUES  
CHARLES J. FERRERA  
DENNIS M. HENNIGAN  
COREY A. MORELLI  
TIMOTHY JAMES THORSEN





# THE SIBLING CORNER



This page is dedicated to siblings together adjusting to grief thru encouragement & sharing

"Siblings Walking Together." We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends. We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters. Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us. Sometimes we will need the support of our friends. At other times we need our families to be there. Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be. We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us.

When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed. We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak. Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life. Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

## Reopening of School and No Child!

Summer ends, and across our nation, from the middle of August to the week after Labor Day, schools open for another year. For those parents surviving a child of school age, be that from nursery school to college or university, this can be as trying a time as the holidays.

School buses travel again the busy highways of our cities and the quiet lanes of our countryside. Anxious parents stand with children about to make the first ride to school. Gaggles of youngsters play at countless stops across our land. America's most precious and costly activity is renewed. The children are off to school.



I remember well the silences of the September mornings of those first years. The bus no longer stopped at our home. It simply drove casually by, the people within never realizing it once carried the focus of my love, the repository of my dreams. The drone of its wheels marked anew the mind-numbing dullness of my fragmented senses as it moved its way down the tree lined lane once alive with my son's comings and goings.

It was always possible to avoid "back to school" sales. Seeing young people and their weary parents gather school supplies and clothing was just too much in those earliest years. Somehow, the perfect notebook, the brilliant sweater, the odd-shaped erasers were simply unendurable. The stream of vehicles heading for Cape Cod for that final Labor Day weekend, the last family outing to end the summer, was another scene to avoid. It was a ritual from which we seemed excluded. Could we still be a family without him?

Those years are gone now. Having returned to education, I now have "back to school" buying to do myself. I see the buses arrive to unload their treasured passengers, no longer feeling the emptiness of a bus that drives on, barren of hopes and dreams. But I do and will forever remember the pain of those unhappy years and sometimes I reflect on the many parents who now feel as I did.

If you are such a parent, if you mourn a child who leaves a school desk somewhere unfilled, I promise that you are not alone in that pain. But even though you are not alone, you know that you are forever marked, that the death of your child or children has altered you in some basic manner.

Perhaps time and much grief work remain before your spirit can yield up the agony and permit a new self to emerge. That time and work was necessary for me, as it actually is for all of us. For me, grief resolution finally recalled me to my original work. I teach. I no longer administer or direct. The need for that fled before bereavement's assault.

I teach math, science, and social studies to sixth grade children, ages 11 to 12 over the course of a year. In wondrous ways they have restored love to my living. There is nothing of an intellectual character with enough value to equal that, so I have given them the love and caring that was mine, evoked by and for Olin. Thus do Olin's gifts live on, called forth and given new life through the innocent and selfless love of schoolchildren.





# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



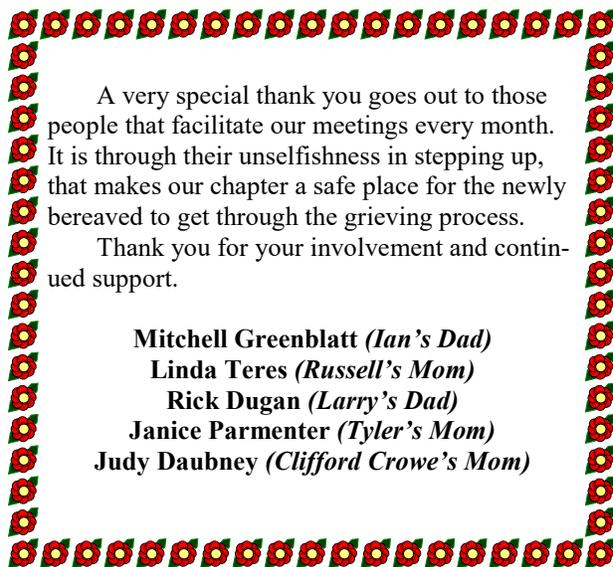
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All who walk this road realize this is not substitution. Such is not possible. But it does reflect qualities of successful reinvestment, something each of us sorely needs. Today as schools prepare for another year, I look forward to a new group of children. But cautions arise within as well, the legacy of that time over 12 years ago, when the world came to a sudden halt, when the laughter of lifetimes ceased, when dreams evaporated with a morning mist.

For those of us who dare live and love again, for those fortunate enough to have found a reinvestment encouraging the same, there is always risk. After all, tragedy can strike again. Our present or past pain grants no immunity. Students, the children within the school, invited me, albeit unknowingly, to take that risk again, although certainly not at the rich and deep level of father and son. Nevertheless, it feels right, and though I will never again know the depth of love which belonged to Olin and me, I welcome the chance to live once more on its margins.

So schools, which were once just another manifestation of hurt, have helped me to restore purpose and balance to daily living. There is surely such a reinvestment awaiting all of us, but we must seek the circumstances and create the opportunities for it to occur. I pray that all of us who have not yet had such good fortune may soon do so. All of our children would want this for us as well. With that thought in mind, it is indeed worth striving for that dimension in life once more.

**Don Hackett**  
**TCF, Kingston, MA**



A very special thank you goes out to those people that facilitate our meetings every month. It is through their unselfishness in stepping up, that makes our chapter a safe place for the newly bereaved to get through the grieving process.

Thank you for your involvement and continued support.

- Mitchell Greenblatt (Ian's Dad)**
- Linda Teres (Russell's Mom)**
- Rick Dugan (Larry's Dad)**
- Janice Parmenter (Tyler's Mom)**
- Judy Daubney (Clifford Crowe's Mom)**

## Why Friends Abandon Grievers

**It happens in all kinds of ways.** One friend just slowly backs off from liking posts on Facebook, waves at a distance from across the sanctuary, stops texting to check up on me.

*Another observes complete radio silence as soon as she walks away from the graveside.*

**Still another hangs in for a few weeks**—calls, texts, even invites me to lunch until I can see in her eyes that my lack of “progress” is making her uneasy. *Then she, too, falls off the grid.*

### Why do people do that?

*Why is it, when we need them most, many friends—and I mean really, truly FRIENDS—just can't hang in and hold on?*

*I admit in the early days I didn't care WHY they did it.*

*I broke my heart and enraged me all at the same time. I felt abandoned, judged, forgotten, pressured to conform to some unwritten standard of how I was “supposed” to do grief and utterly, completely forsaken. It took me months to begin to even consider their perspective and years to come to a place where I could forgive them. Here's what I've figured out this side of devastating, overwhelming, heart-shattering pain about why some friends run away:*

**I represent their greatest fear.** I am a billboard for loss. My life screams, “We are NOT in control!” And that is scary. Most folks run away from scary if they can.

**I remind them that faith is a living thing, tender and vulnerable to trials and testing.** We love to tout Sunday School answers that follow like the tag lines on Aesop's fables when asked about anything to do with Jesus or how God works in the world. But it's just not that simple. The Bible is full (FULL!) of untidy stories where even the giants of faith got it wrong for a season. *I think people are afraid that if they follow me down the rabbit hole of questions they might never come back out.* Better to stand outside and hope I emerge safe and sound without risking themselves.

My situation is messy and they don't want to get involved. I will need ongoing, intense investments of emotional energy and time. **Who knows where it might lead?** Who knows how many hours might have to be given to come alongside and support someone whose journey looks more like slogging through a swamp than a walk in the park? These folks are just not going to risk entanglement.



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Some friends and family are genuinely afraid of doing harm. They feel my pain so deeply that they are frozen, unable to do or say anything because they fear they will make things worse. These are the hearts most easy to forgive and the ones most likely to jump back in when I assure them they cannot make it worse but their support can make it better.

Some people were going to disappear anyway. We don't like to admit it but many friendships are only for a season—we go to the same church, live in the same neighborhood, our kids go to the same school—and as soon as circumstances change these people fade away.

*Well, circumstances certainly changed!* They leave because our differences outweigh our similarities and it requires too much effort to maintain the friendship.

**Understanding why people run away has helped my heart.**

*It doesn't undo the pain inflicted by abandonment of those I felt sure would stay close by my side, but it puts it in perspective.*

***Truth is, I'm not sure how many people I would have stalwartly supported for the long haul either before Dominic ran ahead to heaven.***

None of us possess infinite emotional, mental, physical and relational resources. It's only natural that we portion them out according to our own priorities—even when that means abandoning friends who really need us.

*Rehearsing offense only ties me in knots.*

**It changes nothing.**

*I have limits as well.*

***Forgiving those that chose to walk away frees me to use my resources in more fruitful ways that help me heal.***

***By: Melanie Desimone***

## ***New Traditions***

New traditions are now permanently woven into the fabric of our lives. The catalyst for these traditions is not a happy addition to our lives; indeed, the catalyst marks a traumatic loss in our lives. That subtraction comes in the form of the death of our child.

The finality is crushing. This overwhelming loss has redefined each of us, changed our perspective forever and brought us close to the abyss of insanity. The new traditions gradually pull us back from the abyss and may eventually provide a sense of comfort, serenity and peace.

And so in June we remember our children. We communicate with them, via a note from our hearts, written on a butterfly shaped paper and tied to balloon. We, the parents of the dead, gather and listen to a poem about our collective and individual loss. We the parents of the dead experience the haunting bagpipe as it fills our senses with the sound and the meaning of Amazing Grace. We, the parents of the dead, once again stand together and remember our children. We speak to them. Our butterfly messages become kisses on the wind as our balloons ascend into the sky, floating southward, floating higher and higher until, we imagine, our children can reach out and grab each message and read it and know that we love them deeply and miss them every day and every night. This is our tradition. Each of us views it from the depth of our souls; our love of our children is demonstrated openly as we weep without shame for the loss we have experienced.

A significant part of each parent died when our children died. Yet, a crucial part of each child lives in the hearts of every mother and father. Neither time nor death will erase that bond. It is solid, it is pure and it is forever.

We hope that one day we will each make some sort of peace with this monster, this nightmare, this void, this pain. We hope one day to heal our open wound but know we will always carry an invisible yet deep scar. The worst loss a person can ever experience has been thrust upon us. The only change will come from within each of us. We may one day feel a serenity that comes only through pure love, pure kindness and pure understanding. We will learn to remember yesterday, live today and anticipate tomorrow.

And we will always have our new traditions – traditions that are now part of who we are, where we have been and where we are going in this life. Our traditions remind us that our children lived, laughed and loved. We linger in the moment for that is all we have.

***Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF, Katy, TX***

## ***Disenfranchised Grief***

There is a particular type of grief that sadly more and more parents are suffering from today called “disenfranchised grief.” Counselors and therapists also refer to it as “stigmatized grief.” The children of these parents died from suicide, drug related overdose, and aids. These bereaved parents are often scorned, ostracized and denigrated. Many receive little or no support from family, friends, co-workers and society in general.



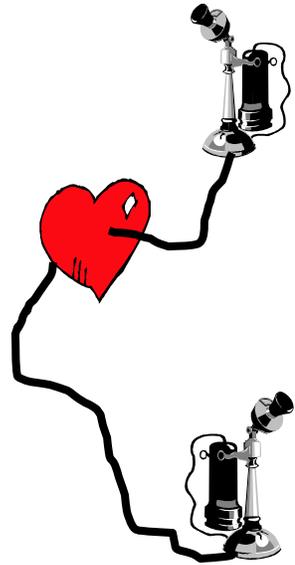
# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



## Phone Friends

Sometimes it helps to just be able to talk to someone; maybe at a time when pain or stress seems too much to bear. We maintain a list of Telephone Friends; people who are willing to listen, to commiserate, to give whatever support they can. In a time of need, feel free to call one of our Telephone Friends.

- Ed & Joan Motuzas, ...**Scott**, age 31, Kidney and Liver Failure, .....(508)473-4239
- Janice Parmenter, .....**Tyler**, age 29, Chronic Addiction, .....(508)528-5715
- Judy Daubney, .....**Clifford**, age 27, Suicide, .....(508)529-6942
- Linda Teres,.....**Russell**, age 19, Automobile Accident, .....(508)366-2085
- Mitchell Greenblatt,...**Ian**, age 18, Automobile Accident,..... (508)881-2111
- Sandra Richiazzi.....**Bryan**, age 17, Automobile Accident,.....(508)877-8106
- Sarah Commerford....**Timothy**, age 21, Homicide.....(508)429-9230



It is always useful to have more Telephone Friends; individuals who are willing to provide support and comfort via the telephone. The chapter provides guidance for those who want to help. When you listen and talk to the bereaved, you make a difference. A longer list of Telephone Friends increases the likelihood that someone will be available when needed. Call Ed Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 if you would like to be a Telephone Friend.

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With unspoken words, the world casts a pall of blame and shame on these individuals with the unspoken implication that if they had been better parents they could have somehow prevented such a tragedy from occurring. Many people never hear their friends or loved ones mention their precious child's name again. They generally do not receive the same level of support that accidental and natural cause deaths do. This exacerbates the grief process. This ever increasing phenomenon has very little literature or research available at this time to aid these parents in their journey through grief. As members of TCF we need to be especially tender with these parents. We can embrace them and welcome them to share the stories about their children. The heartbreaking circumstances under which these children died do not define their lives as a whole. We all loved our children dearly and were the best parents that we knew how to be. If it were otherwise we would not need TCF and the support it gives.

**Janet Reyes**  
**TCF/AAC**

*Who cares that you hurt, that you are sad, that things are bad right now? I do, dear friend, I do. ~Fay H. Smith Hardin*

## Falsely Placed Guilt

Aileen was convinced Isaac's death was her fault. She thought she must have done something absolutely horrible to have caused him to die. Cause and effect when all we have is the affect of death.

She could not deal with the reality that it just happened. And no one was responsible. No one to blame. Can't convict a bacteria which is what did kill him. So she blamed herself.

"I'm his mother. I should have protected him. I should have been able to save him. Mothers take care of their children. Not let them die."

Or "I'm to blame. I must have done something so terrible that my son died. I'm to blame. I should have gone to the City. I could have saved him. Taken him to the hospital and saved him. I failed him. It is my fault. My fault." She would keep over and over.

She could not accept the reality that it was meningitis that killed him. Not her. That even though she was his mother and mothers are powerful they are weak too. Feeble in the face of a real killer. She could not accept that his death could be so arbitrary. So pointless.

Mothers give birth. Not bury their children. Mothers nurture, buy clothes, enjoy their children. Not pick out coffins. They wrap their children in cocoons of safety, not shrouds. They make sense out of life. Not deal with the senselessness of death.

Aileen could not stop blaming herself for what she did not do. She could not protect her son. Not fight off meningitis. Not keep him alive. So she blamed herself for what she saw as a failure.





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But you can't pack away grief in the same way you can toss stuff into a suitcase and then stash it on a shelf until you are ready to deal with it. Grief simply is a part of our fabric, woven into each fiber of our being, always with us, but not always recognized or even acknowledged. It nudges us, calls us, teases us, hurts us at the least touch. Grief demands to be heard, and when we turn a deaf ear, it grows louder and more persistent until we grow weary trying to ignore it.

We can sort it out, roll it up tightly, pack it carefully, lock it away, or even carry it around with us, but we cannot ignore it forever. It returns again and again until we learn to embrace it, wrestle with it, and adapt to its flow. If we are lucky, we learn to carry the load we have without too much guilt or anger and have found ways to release the emotions that accompany our grief.

Like our "stuff," grief defines a part of who we are, but not all of who we are. The trick is to figure out which parts are grief-born and which parts are joy-based. If you are lucky, you'll discover, some day, that it is all the same and that grief truly is the price we pay for loving someone. I am glad I bought the ticket, paid the price, shared the journey, and have a memento or two from the ride. It is often lonely, sometimes hard, but never boring. Trying to carry it all with you isn't possible, but neither is ignoring it all and hoping it will go away.

So, pack what you truly need, give the rest away, and get going on your travels. Each breath takes you closer to your destination, even if you don't know where that is. Learn to let some things go so you can pack lighter next time. You could let go of some of the guilt or fear or anger or hurt. How about weeding through the awful parts so you can get to the loving parts? Don't discard it without embracing it first, but once you have examined the whole picture, let go of the "stuff" you no longer need to carry in order to define yourself. Let go of the labels and the worries.

Will it happen again? It could. Will I be able to handle it better next time? Maybe. Will I ever find love like that again? Not unless you look for it. Will I forget? Not likely. Maybe that is why we believe we need so much stuff around us all the time. Maybe we are really afraid of losing it all, not just the bad parts, but the good times as well. Do we carry too much, save too much, pack too much because we are afraid?

Just as you have never forgotten the name of the very first person you fell in love with, you will not forget your child. If we let go of that fear, we all can travel a bit lighter. Fear is a heavy burden to carry. You cannot forget love that has been given and received. You cannot forget the exchange of heart and soul.

You don't need the stuff in order to remember the love.

Love is the size of a sigh, as light as a kiss, as gentle as a whisper, and as small as a moment in time. It comes in all sizes and shapes and cannot be saved until later. Love simply IS, and you *have* been loved. So lighten up. Carry less, live more, and love a lot. Love is a good thing to carry and really the ONLY ESSENTIAL thing we need!

Darcie D. Sims

*Darcie D. Sims, PhD, CHT, CT, GMS, is a bereaved parent, a grief management specialist, a nationally certified thanatologist, a certified pastoral bereavement specialist, and a licensed psychotherapist and hypnotherapist. She is the author of several books. Darcie is also an internationally recognized speaker and has served on several boards, including the National Board of Directors for The Compassionate Friends. Darcie received The Compassionate Friends Professional Award in 1999.*

## Progress Check

It's usually around this time of year, when summer is nearly over and fall is around the corner, that I like to take a close look at the progress of my recovery. Maybe it's the seemingly endless "back-to-school" sales that suddenly end or the return of the yellow school busses with children carrying lunch boxes that causes me to feel a need to take a look. This is one of those times of year that some of us find difficult to deal with, and checking where we stand during rough times is always a good idea, especially if it helps us find areas in which we can improve. As a possible bonus we may even find areas of real progress that may boost our awareness of the positive steps we have made. It usually is difficult to notice the steps we make, particularly early in recovery, unless we make a concerted effort to notice them.



So the first step should be to look closely at your beliefs concerning what you will find. If you believe your recovery is going poorly, it probably is or it's likely not going as well as it could. We tend to see what we believe we will see and we tend to miss what we believe is not there. Dr. Wayne Dyer's book, *You'll See it When You Believe It*, covers this topic very well and I recommend it along with any of his other books as excellent recovery reading material. The quality of our recoveries, as well as our lives, is determined by what we believe.



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If you develop an attitude of positive expectation about your recovery you will begin to see your progress more easily. What you need to do is adopt a belief that you can find something positive about your recovery no matter how small the positive may be if you look closely enough. The trick is to convince yourself that noticing the smallest of positives is worth the trouble. It is worth the trouble your life depends on it. Noticing the smallest of positives can enable you to make a necessary positive mental attitude shift that is required for good recovery. Having a positive mental attitude is not the same thing as positive thinking. It doesn't mean that you pretend that everything is okay when it isn't. Positive mental attitude means that no matter how bad things are we can at least learn something of value from even the most horrible things that happen to us.

I'll use an extreme example to make my point. Early in recovery the very best positive we may be able to come up with is, "well, at least I believe there is hope that someday I will feel better than I do now." Admittedly, when our child has died, even this small positive may be difficult to believe, but let's say you do believe it, or you're willing to believe that you will someday believe it. As weak as this positive may seem to you it still is strong enough to begin the process of causing a positive mental attitude shift.

The shift will be small and probably not noticeable to you, but it will nevertheless occur. With this shift you will be more likely to notice other positives, for example, you are reading this newsletter and are therefore obviously taking a positive step to see if this article has some value to you in your recovery. Even if it didn't, the fact that you are reading it alone is a positive recovery step if you choose to see it as such.

We often choose to see our small steps as insignificant. This judgment alone is enough

to slow our recoveries to a crawl. Each step no matter how small is required to complete the journey. The sooner you accept even the smallest recovery step and celebrate each and every one as it occurs, the sooner you will benefit to the greatest extent each step offers.

So how do you do this? There are several ways. My favorite is to ask three questions. Early tomorrow morning, as soon after awaking as you remember, ask yourself the question, "What can I do today to improve the quality of my life?" It doesn't matter what you come up with, but be sure you keep it simple - make sure it's something you can easily do. Tomorrow evening ask yourself, "How did I do?" Write your answer in a notebook or journal.



Then answer the question, "No matter how small, what positive recovery steps have I taken today?" Do this every day for at least ten days. Each day come up with different answers. At the end of ten days you will know if it is beneficial to your recovery to continue. If so, by all means do so. If not, you may find it helpful to do a progress check on your recovery by asking yourself these questions for a few days every month or so. Give it a try; you'll only know if it's a positive for you if you do.

**Pat Akery**  
**TCF, Medford, OR**

## *Tears are Hot*

I never really noticed how hot tears are as they roll down my face. Sure I have cried many times before you died; but you leaving made time stand still and life feel so surreal.

Shock, numbness, nausea, and pain so severe I was certain I would die. Can't they see it? Surely they can. No one acts as if they can see it. My heart hurts so badly, my soul aches; my breasts hurt yearning for my children, how can that be? Why can't they see it? Why can't they help?

Who am I now that my children have gone? Where am I now that your voices are nowhere to be heard? There are no phone calls with crisis to fix. No more reasons to give you money today. No problems that only Mom knows the answers to.

It's been a year now since you went home, and I find myself feeling so alone. Who will care for me when I am old? What of my future? Where have my dreams gone, your college graduations, your careers, your weddings, the holidays at your homes?

Since you left I struggle with so many questions. Am I still a Mom? I have no children now, so how could I possibly be a Mom? What if I had bought four new tires for the car instead of two? What if I had not given you gas money to take the trip?

I never noticed how hot tears are as they roll down my face. As I cry for missing you both as I often do, the tears fall in slow motion symbolic of how today it's still so unreal.

It seems like yesterday I received that dreaded call; I hate to have to tell you this, he said on the phone. At that moment I knew what I was about to hear would change my life forever. I knew what he was about to say I could not bear.

But for some reason I did not know you were dead; I thought mothers were to know those things, a feeling, a hunch. I had so much guilt that I didn't know my babies had died when I was in that meeting at 10:30 that day.



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from page 10)

My first thought when I heard his voice was that you made him call because your daughter/niece “our baby girl” had died and you could not tell me yourself for your broken hearts and your personal shock. But then I heard those dreaded words that I will never forget the gist.

Amanda and Logan have been killed in an accident, or maybe he said, Amanda and Logan are dead, or possibly even, there has been an accident and Amanda and Logan didn’t make it, I don’t recall but the end result was all the same.

I never noticed how hot tears are as they roll down my face. As I cry today a year later, I cry more for me and our little girl not having you in our lives for I know you are home now and we will be together again one day.

I thank you for leaving your baby girl here with me; I thank God daily she was in the car behind you. We have each other and we will make it through and create a new life together as you meant us to.

Caring for her has helped me to heal that part of me that asked if I am still a Mom. My answer today is yes, I am a Mom of three, two of my children live in heaven and I have one precious little girl who lives here with me.

The year has gone so fast; I can’t believe I write this now a year later and in some ways I feel no different. The pain is still immense; my heart still hurts, my soul still aches, the physical pain still remains.

But the difference is today I have seen the other side; I have experienced joy where last year I knew I never would again, I have laughed and smiled and played as we used to do. I strive daily to go on in your memory, with your love as my inspiration as you would want me to.

Some days I even forget to notice the temperature of the tears as they fall down my face, for once more they are healing tears, tears of joy, tears of anger and tears of sadness, they are not only the tears of a Mothers broken heart.

**Deana L. Martin**  
**In Memory of my children, Amanda Suzanne  
Mills and Logan Robert Mills**

## ***A Dream Deferred***

Christine died on November 6, 1992. She was six years old and in kindergarten, but at 35 pounds and in size four clothes, she looked much younger. Brain-damaged before birth by hydrocephalus, she needed hours of occupational and physical therapy to learn to crawl, brush her teeth, ride her tricycle, zip her coat. I massaged her, coaxed her, pleaded with her, praised her, and watched her grow.

I never knew what skill might confuse Christine. She walked at thirteen months but did not crawl until fifteen months. She fed herself at eighteen months but could not hug herself until she was four. When she was two and a half, she was given a complete battery of tests. Her motor skills ranged from less than one year to average,

But Christine passed the speech test at a six-year-old level. At four she composed music and created lyrics to go with her melodies. She was a natural in math and, in true brat fashion, lorded it over her older brother who was not. “It’s OK that you’re not good in math,” she would tell Bobby. “Boys can’t do math.” Or she would walk up to him as he struggled over multiplication, point at a problem with her tiny hand, say, “That’s wrong. You’ll just have to do it again,” and run before he gave her a well-deserved slap.

Christine had so much potential. Her therapists, her teachers, her pediatrician, her neurosurgeon marveled at what she could do. She was humming nursery rhymes at thirteen months, humming Tchaikovsky at three. There were days when I had visions of Christine as an adult, leading an orchestra as they played her Seventh Symphony or on stage singing her latest Country and Western hit.

And then at six it was all over. Her music, her songs, turned off. My dreams muted.

And I found myself asking a question another poet in very different circumstances asked himself. What happens to a dream deferred? Does it merely fester? Or does it explode? (Langston Hughes, “Harlem,” 1953.)

Two seasons later I have a partial and paradoxical answer. It does both. It does neither.

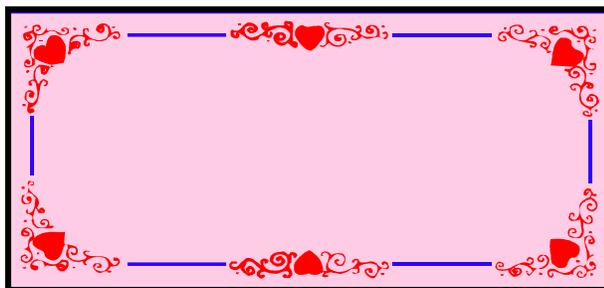
These have been moments of intense anguish, when I marveled that my body could hold my mood and live. There have been times when sadness has softly sifted through my daily routines, shadowing my cooking and my speaking. But under both, deeper than the explosion of Christine’s unexpected death or the long sadness of her empty room, lies a certainty that Christine still exists, that we will one day be reunited.

A part of me crossed with her into death, still walks in love with her. Yet it is not a budding musician I walk with, or a brat, or a handicapped child. She was all of these. She is none of these. I walk with her. Her soul’s whole now, bathed in light. Relationships fade and change. Love lasts.



**Sandra Ball**  
**TCF Salem, NJ**  
**In Memory of Christine**

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### ***TO OUR NEW MEMBERS***

*Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person - or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.*



### ***TO OUR OLD MEMBERS***

*We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting we have new parents. **THINK BACK...** what would it have been like for you if there had not been any “oldies” to welcome you, share your grief, and encourage you? It was from them you heard, “your pain will not always be this bad; it really does get softer.”*